

BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

August 29, 1962

Subject: Soviet Military Shipments to Cuba

QUESTION: The State Department says that from 3,000 to 5,000 Soviet technicians have recently arrived in Cuba. How seriously do we view this? Are we bringing this to the attention of other Latin American countries and the OAS?

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT

On Friday, August 24, the State Department held a background news conference during which it was confirmed that the Soviets had resumed large scale military deliveries to Cuba in late July. These deliveries included transportation, electronic and construction equipment, such as, communication vans, radar vans, trucks, mobile generators and possibly surface-to-air-missiles. Most of the equipment appears designed for the improvement of Cuba's coastal and air defenses. The passenger ships are believed to have carried probably 3,000 Soviet specialists and technicians, but the figure could be as high as 5,000. There is no solid information that military personnel in combat units have arrived in Cuba and no information that other bloc countries are involved. The estimated number of military technicians who have recently arrived appears compatible with the amount and type of military equipment so far known to have been delivered.

At your Press Conference on August 22 in answer to a similar question you said in part:

"New supplies definitely, in large quantities. Troops, we do not have information, but an increased number of technicians...we are examining the significance of this now."

The Washington Post, August 28, reported that the Guatemalan Foreign Minister Unda Murillo said that Guatemala would suggest a meeting of OAS foreign ministers to discuss the Soviet shipments, common defense and a possible blockade of Cuba. The Department has not received any formal notification of this intent.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY

1. While we cannot yet be certain of the precise nature of all the equipment or technicians, we are watching the situation closely. Present information indicates that the main purpose of these deliveries is that of strengthening Cuba's coastal and air defenses. We do not know how many of the technicians are economic nor how many

are military. The number of persons estimated to have arrived recently does not appear out of line with the number that would be needed to install, operate or train others to operate the amount of military equipment so far known to have been delivered.

2. The Latin American press indicates that the other hemisphere countries are aware of the stepped up traffic between the Soviet Union and Cuba. We have no plans at the present time to bring this matter before the OAS.